

New law establishes the Grandparent Subsidy Program in the office of family support of the Department of Social Services for the purpose of assisting eligible grandparents and step-grandparents who have legal custody or guardianship of their grandchildren or step-grandchildren.

New law provides that a "grandchild" or "step-grandchild" shall mean a child under the age of 19 and who meets eligibility criteria as a needy child as provided in existing law.

New law provides for eligibility requirements for grandparents of a grandchild or step-grandchild to qualify for a subsidy under the Grandparent Subsidy Program, as follows:

- (1) Possess a judgment of legal custody of a grandchild or step-grandchild.
- (2) Have an annual income of less than 150% of the federal poverty threshold.
- (3) Apply for benefits through the FITAP.
- (4) Have neither of the child's parents residing in the applicant's household.
- (5) Pursue the enforcement of child support obligations against both parents of the child with the assistance of the Dept. of Social Services.

New law further provides that an applicant for the subsidy shall be ineligible for one year from the date of a felony conviction for possession, use or distribution of a controlled substance, or one year from the date of release from incarceration, whichever is applicable.

New law provides that the office of family support shall promulgate rules and regulations to establish the amount of the subsidy to be awarded for each child, and to provide for any other eligibility requirements necessary to comply with state and federal law and promote the safety and well-being of children for whom subsidies are issued, and to establish annual reconsideration procedures for eligibility.

New law provides that the subsidy shall be administered by the office of family support and funded through the TANF block grant.

Effective upon signature of governor (July 9, 1999).

(Adds R.S. 46:237)